Black America: From Nadir through the Great Depression

HIST 347 • Spring 2015

Instructor

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Figure 1: Early faculty members at Palmer Memorial Institute (Guilford County, NC)

Meetings

Except for university holidays and other occasions either noted on the syllabus or announced in class, the course meets

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. until 10:40 a.m. in Rayzor Hall 121.

Course Description

This course focuses on the period between the late nineteenth century and the dawn of the modern civil rights movement, an era sometimes known in American history as the age of Jim Crow and characterized by the rise and articulation of a racial caste system in the United States. Students in the course will study the development of this system, but the course will also pay particular attention to the lives that African American men, women, and children carved out for themselves within the real and ostensive limits of Jim Crow. The class will also pay especial attention to the ways that Africans Americans—through their ordinary living and through their determined action alike—challenged Jim Crow, eventually diminishing the consequences of caste on a great many aspects of American life.

By the end of the course, students will have a firm handle on the kinds of bias, discrimination, violence, and segregation that came to define American life during the period. They will possess a clear and mature view of the ways that African Americans experienced, mitigated, and confronted caste (and the ways in which black community in the age of Jim Crow, and African American strivings against it were themselves shaped by variables such as gender, region, and class). The course makes extended use of case studies as a way of coming to terms with the nature and substance of black life during the period, so students will get substantial practice appraising this form of historical study. For the final project, students will craft a case study of black life in Houston in the early twentieth century, thus giving students the opportunity to bring the course readings and discussions to bear on a research project of their own based in Houston periodicals from the era. Finally, upon completion of the course students will have developed a comprehensive understanding of what our present era owes to the one under study.

Assessment & Assignments

The final grade for students enrolled in HIST 347 will be based on the following:

performance on an initial essay
10% of the final grade

performance on two short exams
20%

contribution to creating and sustaining a vibrant intellectual community within the class through attentive listening, thoughtful conversation, and others means that promote comity and contribute to learning
20% of the final grade

performance on an end-of-course research project (8–10 pages in length) and its constituent parts
50% of the final grade

HOME EDITION — THE HOUSTON PRESS — 1 CENT PER COPY

Vol. 4. No. 267. HOUSTON, TEXAS, FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 1917. INDEPENDENT

16 DEAD-22 INJURED FROM RIOT

SENATE NOW TO TRY JIM ON CHARGES

House Votes to Sustain Fuller's Charges; More Accusations Against Governor by Committee of Nine.

City Under Martial Law

TROOPS WHO MUTINIED TO BE REMOVED

RIOTERS NOW SEEM DOCILE; ARRESTS EASY

One Negro Soldier Tells What Precipitated Riot

Policemen Pursue "Bastinado of Negroes"

Army Trucks Haul Rioters to Prison

Martial Law Declared By Governor Near Midnight

Heights Mayor Is On Job During Riot

Jim's Governor Until House Is Officially Told

"Move On" Law Is Enforced

WEATHER

Many Negroes Rounded Up—More Than 100 Still At Large—Illinois National Guard, Police and Civilians Searching For Them—Leader Is Killed—Negro Troops To Be Moved From Houston

THE DEAD

THE WOUNDED

"Lock Me Up," Pleads Negro

Figure 2: *Houston Press* Front Page Following the Camp Logan Riot.

Further details concerning the assignments will be available on OwlSpace. Students who do not complete all assignments will receive a failing grade in the course. Work up to three days late is happily accepted (but will be graded without comment). Work submitted more than three days past the due date will receive a grade of 50%.

The due dates for class assignments are as follows: **Essay 1**, Wed., Jan. 21; **Exam 1**, Wed., Jan. 28; **Exam 2**, Wed., Feb. 18; **Final Project**, Wed., May 6.

The final project will be submitted in several parts over the second half of the semester. Please consult the assignment description on OwlSpace for additional details.

Books and Readings

The following books form the course's core reading:

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press, 2012. ISBN 1595586431

Bay, Mia. *To Tell the Truth Freely: The Life of Ida B. Wells*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010. ISBN 080901646X

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk* (Modern Library 100 Best Nonfiction Books). Centenary ed. Modern Library, 2003. ISBN 0375509119

Boyle, Kevin. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*. New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2005. ISBN 0805079335

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1996. ISBN 0807845965

King, Gilbert. *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013. ISBN 0061792268

Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011. ISBN 0674062116

Statement Regarding Disability

Students with a documented disability and in need of academic or other adjustments should speak with me during the first two weeks of class (all communication will remain confidential). Students with disabilities should also contact the office of Disabled Student Services in Allen Center room 111 (phone 737-5841, e-mail **adarice@rice.edu**).

Course Calendar

The course schedule is given below. All reading assignments should be completed before class on the date indicated.

Jim Crow: A Still Warm Body?

1/13/15: Getting Started

1/15/15: *New Jim Crow*, Foreword, Preface, Acknowledgements, and Introduction

1/20/15: *New Jim Crow*, chs. 1–4

1/22/15: New Jim Crow, chs. 5–6

New Negro Lives in the Aftermath of Emancipation

1/27/15: *Souls of Black Folk*, Forethought, and chs. 1–6

1/29/15: *Souls of Black Folk*, chs. 7–9

2/3/15: *Souls of Black Folk*, chs. 10–14 and Afterthought

2/5/15: *To Tell the Truth Freely*, Introduction, and chs. 1–2

2/10/15: *To Tell the Truth Freely*, chs. 3–6

2/12/15: *To Tell the Truth Freely*, ch. 7

2/17/15: *To Tell the Truth Freely*, chs. 8–9 and *Gender and Jim Crow*, Introduction and chs. 1–2

Girding Caste

2/19/15: *Gender and Jim Crow*, chs. 3–4

2/24/15: *Gender and Jim Crow*, chs. 5-8 and Epilogue

2/26/15: *Condemnation of Blackness*, Introduction and ch. 1

3/10/15: *Condemnation of Blackness*, chs. 2–4

3/12/15: *Condemnation of Blackness*, chs. 5–6, and Conclusion

Figure 3: Wayne Miller, "An alley between overcrowded tenements, with garbage thrown over the railings of the back porches," Chicago, 1948.

Race, Rights, and Murder: A View from the Jazz Age North

3/17/15: *Arc of Justice*, Prologue and chs. 1–4

3/19/15: *Arc of Justice*, ch. 5

3/24/15: *Arc of Justice*, chs. 6–9

3/26/15: *Arc of Justice*, ch. 10 and Epilogue.

Race, Rights, and Murder: A View from the South on the Cusp of the Civil Rights Movement

3/31/15: *Devil in the Grove*, Prologue and chs. 1–9

4/6/15: *Devil in the Grove*, chs. 10–15

4/9/15: *Devil in the Grove*, chs. 16–17

4/13/15: *Devil in the Grove*, chs. 18–22, and Epilogue

Conclusions: Houston, the Camp Logan Riots, and our Long Look at Caste

4/16/15: Student Presentations

4/20/15: Student Presentations

4/23/15: Student Presentations

Figure 4: A Southern chain gang, crica 1906. Library of Congress LC-D4-16155